THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Feeding and upkeep of zoo animals at Nandankanan Zoos is the responsibility of the Orissa Government. There is no Centrally Sponsored Schemes under which assistance can be provided to State Governments for meeting the recurring expenditure. The State Government has, however, been requested to provide additional funds for feeding and upkeep costs of the zoo animals.

(c) During the year 1998-99, the State Government has provided only Rs. 53 lakhs for the upkeep of animals at Nandankanan Zoo as against Rs. 64 lakhs during 1997-98.

Tiger Population

492. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA
SHRI AKHILESH DAS:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report in the Asian Age of December 13, 1998 regarding a downslide in the population of Tiger and the tampering of population figures;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that 200 to 300 tigers are being lost year after year since 1989, giving the sanctuary wise and reserve-wise details of population of Tiger and other Wild Cats since the Project Tiger was taken up, census-wise and how these figures compare with WWF-MP figures; and

(c) the reasons for the sharp decline in their population despite all the preservation and promotion efforts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI):(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is a fact that a decline in the tiger population of the country has taken place since 1989. The figures of tiger and panther population as per the past successive estimations carried out in the country and Tiger Reserves are given separately in Annexture. (*See Appendix 186, Annexure No. 5*)

(c) The decline in population of tiger can mainly be attributed to poaching and illegal trade of tiger and its products and the loss of its habitat.

Storage facilities for Potatoes

493. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to procure potatoes and other perishable items during their crop seasons to maintain their price level;

(b) whether adequate cold storage facilities have been or are being created to meet the situation; if so, broad outline thereof; and

(c) if no such facilities have been created, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) There is no proposal at present to procure potatoes and other perishable commodities during the crop season to maintain the price line.

(b) and (c) The total installed cold stograge capacity in the country is 103.54 lakh tonnes. Out of this over 87% of the capacity is being exclusively used for storage of potatoes only. In order to provide additional cold storage facilities for potatoes and other perishable vegetables, a scheme of establishing a chain of cold storages in all the States union Territories is being implemented by the Government of india and State Government.